



Office of the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington DC 20330-1670

6 December 2002

To the members of the best enlisted force in the world:

My first few months as the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force have been busy, challenging, and rewarding. What an exciting time to serve our nation! The best part of this job is always to get out and see the great things our people are accomplishing. I'm always amazed by your selfless dedication and ceaseless efforts, and I brag about you to whoever will listen.

But while we have accomplished great things, new challenges are continually on the horizon. I want to talk for a moment about some of those challenges and how I believe the enlisted corps can propel our Air Force through them.

It should be apparent to all of us that the high operations tempo is not going away any time soon. Our end strength numbers appear to be steady for the near future, and our commitments around the world continue to grow. Those are the realities.

Senior leadership knows how hard you're working, and we're refining the AEF process each cycle to give you and your families the most predictability possible in the world in which we operate. We're working quality of life issues to give you the best benefits and the pay you deserve for your hard work. You are our first priority.

The rest is up to you. I believe that it is the enlisted force that will shape the way the Air Force meets the challenges of this century. Of the approximately 364,000 people in our active duty Air Force, about 293,000 proudly wear stripes on their sleeves. Add to that the Air National Guard enlisted--approximately 98,000, and another 59,000 in the Reserve, and the enlisted force makes up a large part of our total force team. We need each and every one of those people operating at their maximum effectiveness to meet and exceed the demands on our force.

What does that mean to you?

Airmen—we need your enthusiasm, energy and technological expertise focused on the mission everyday. Remember that being a good follower is a prerequisite to being a good leader. Be proud of what you do and the contributions you're making to keep our nation free.

Junior NCOs—You are our front-line supervisors. We are depending on you to shape our airmen and to give them the tools and training they need. Get back to the basics of face-to-face leadership. No one knows your people like you do. Train them, care about them, hold them accountable, reward them, then sit back and watch them soar.

Senior NCOs—You've been around the block. Take that experience and focus it downward toward your people. Move obstacles that keep them from efficiency, listen to

their fresh ideas, and be their advocate. Make those that come behind you better Senior NCOs than you and I are today. Remember that the most important job you will ever have is the one you hold right now.

Guard and Reserve forces—Your contribution to our mission is critical. As you continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with your active duty counterparts, know that a grateful nation recognizes and appreciates what you are doing for our country.

To all of you—The role of the enlisted force is more important now than ever. Our Air Force will continue to evolve and transform. New technologies and more joint operations are on the horizon. The one constant will be our nation's reliance on you to make the mission happen every day.

Thank you for what you're doing for our Air Force, and this Great Nation.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald R. Murray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gerald" being more prominent.

GERALD R. MURRAY

Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force